

REMARKS OF MRS. LYNDON B. JOHNSON
LINCOLN SCHOOL, COLUMBUS, INDIANA

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Office of the Press Secretary
to Mrs. Johnson

THE WHITE HOUSE

It is more than appropriate that this most remarkable of school buildings should be named for Abraham Lincoln, for it exemplifies not only his love of learning, but the vigor of his pioneering.

This school is the result of fearless pioneering of the kind Abraham Lincoln loved. It is a pioneering into planning our public buildings -- indeed our cities for excellence. Unless this bold new pattern succeeds, the alternative is a growing wilderness of haphazard ugliness.

This school and this city have thrilled me beyond all expectations. For the school and the community which it expresses is more than the creation of beautiful architecture. It is the successful and pioneer demonstration of a magnificent idea.

I am no expert in the exciting new field of amenities in town and countryside. But I can claim to be an avid and devoted student. And the more one studies what is happening in transforming our environment into pleasant surroundings, the more one's natural path of study leads to Columbus, Indiana. It is a fascinating laboratory for all students of community planning.

Twenty years ago, this "new Columbus" began with a citizen who had an idea and the determination through his company and his family foundation to help bring it about.

Why did an industrial company organized for profit use its profits to give the community gifts that have made Columbus an architectural mecca?

The answer is best supplied by Mr. Irwin Miller himself who, on the occasion of another dedication, stated:

"We would like to see this community come to be not the cheapest community in America, but the very best community of its size in the country. We would like to see it become the city in which the smartest, the ablest, the best young families anywhere would like to live . . . a community that is open in every single respect to persons of every race, color and opinion, that makes them feel welcome and at home here . . . a community which will offer their children the best education available anywhere . . . a community of strong, outspoken churches, of genuine cultural interests, exciting opportunities for recreation . . . a community whose citizens are themselves well-paid and who will not tolerate poverty for others, or slums in their midst."

I hope private businesses everywhere will take note of this testimony -- and see for themselves its documentation in the community and the citizens of Columbus. The cities of today, await the help of enlightened businesses.

As in all benevolent cycles, one great idea gives birth to another -- here in Columbus the School Board, the Redevelopment Commission, the Library Board and -- most important of all -- the citizens have joined in this effort with continued results such as we see here today.

This American city of Columbus has been called the Athens of the prairie. Ancient Athens, with its magnificent Acropolis, would, I believe, have been proud and pleased to have you so designated -- and as for myself I congratulate and thank you as your fellow American, for blazing a new path to the cities of the future.

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